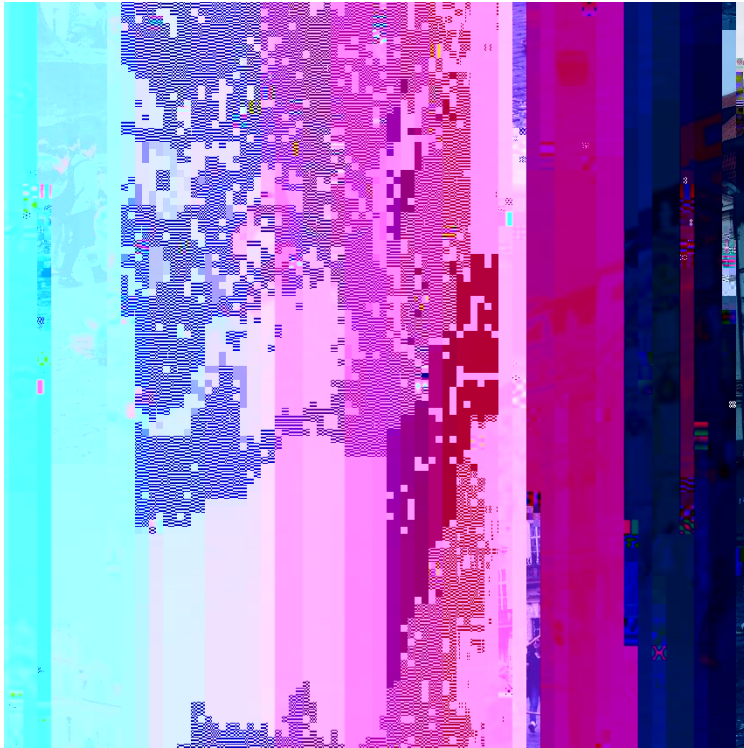


**Czech it Out! (Sorry Not Sorry)**  
Charles University, Prague  
Fall 2015

I spent the Fall 2015 semester studying at Charles University in Prague. During the application process, I was over-the-moon, Google searching pictures of the city covered in snow, absolutely ecstatic. But, as my departure date grew nearer, I started to panic. Leaving home/school/family/friends for four months sounded crazy. And it was, but it was also one of the



dguv fgekukqpu Iøxg gxgt ocfg. Pq ocvgt y jgvjgt {qwøxg iqv c jgctv hwmm qh cfxgpvwtg qt {qwøtg starting to second guess everything, study abroad is an amazing program. There were ups and downs but, for me, it was all worth it.

I arrived in Prague a few days before the Official Arrival Date and stayed with family. Jet lag is a monster and I was waking up at 4am for a week. Students who arrived on the official day got a ride from the airport to the dormitory through ECES (Eastern and Central European Studies ó and an acronym {qwømm jgct c nqv kh {qw gpf wr kp Prague!). The first few days were full of orientation activities like a scavenger hunt, welcome lectures and a river cruise. They were also full of a lot of new faces. Meeting so many people at once can be overwhelming, but everyone was

friendly and outgoing, especially the people who lived in my dorm.

I ejqug vq uvc{ kp c fqt o dgecwug Iø o wugf vq nkxkpi kp tgukdence at SFU, and I wanted to be around other students. There are some major pros and cons to living at *Kolej Komenského*. Rtqu: kvøu ykvjkip ycmkpi fkuvcpeg vq Rtc iw g Ccuving, c ujqt vtc o tkfg vq vjg ekv{ egpvtg qt uejqqn, vjgtgøu c communal space and the single rooms are not awful. The building itself is pretty darn ugly, and the rooms are nothing glamorous. But they have everything you need and with a few posters, they feel almost like home. A few of my friends had awkward roommate encounters, and Iøf fghinitely recommend choosing a single room. It could be challenging talking to the people at reception as very few of them spoke English. There was always something going on in the dorm, though, whether people were going out for dinner or celebrating someoneøu dkvtj fc{. Dkuenaimer: there was always something going on with the English-speaking, American exchange students.

ECES is an American-run program and takes almost all American students (except me cpf qpg Fkppkuj dq{!), uq o gvjkpi I fklpøv mpqy y jgp I cr rned. They were all great people, but kh {qwøtg nqqmkpi hqt c oqtg o wnvkewnwvtcn rtqitc o, vjku ku pqv vjg qpg. Vjku rtqitc o ku swkvg

insular, so if you want to be immersed in the local student population, consider applying elsewhere (but come visit Prague, of course).

Vjgtgøu c yqo cp nkxkpi kp vjg dormitory named Zuzana who is ddukecm{ c C|gej pcvkqpcn vtgcuwtg. Ujgøu lived all over the world, speaks perfect English and loves getting to know the exchange students. She offered regular visits to art galleries and cafes, and hooked us up with cheap tickets to the ballet or opera. Prague is an amazing city for culture. I went to the opera three times, each for under ten dollars. Once you look past the super touristy concerts advertised around the castle, you can find life changing experiences for almost no money. My favorite experiences were things like that ó ejggtkpi qp Rtc iw gøu hockey team, Sparta, at a home game, finding the best falafel in the city, or watching Swan Lake in a two hundred year old theatre.

Lgvøu vcnm cdqww Rtc iw g hqt c second. I chose to go there because of family connections and because I loved the city when I visited in the past. Even after four months, I was stunned by how beautiful it is. The main attractions are constantly packed with towtkuvu, nkmg vjg Cjctngu Btkf ig cpf Rtc iw g ecuvng, dwv vjcv fqgupøv ocmg vjgo cp{ nguu dtgcvjvcmkpi. Qt ited igncvq htqo Apigncvq cpf ycnm wr Rgv ¶p jknn vq nqqm qww qxgt vjg ekv{. Prague is beautiful in the fall ó and staying until December means everything is decorated for Christmas!

Besides beauty, Prague has a rich history vjcv {qw ecp cno quv hggñ cu {qwøtg ycnmkpi fqyp the cobblestone streets. Charles University was founded in 1348 by the Holy Roman Emperor ó and *you can study there*. Excuse me but, coming from Canada, that blew my mind. It was also

advisor said they would transfer to SFU. This is because of the difficulty of transferring to SFU (especially from Europe) it can be tough to stay motivated in school, so try to pick

During orientation, ECES ran a mandatory two-